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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (UNAVEM III)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1098 (1997) of 27 February 1997, by which the Council, inter alia, decided to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III until 31 March 1997. It covers recent developments since my report of 7 February 1997 (S/1997/115) and contains recommendations regarding the further extension of the mandate of the Mission.

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

2. During the reporting period, my Special Representative, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, in close collaboration with the representatives of the three observer States (Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America), held intensive consultations on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1098 (1997). Those consultations involved meetings with President José Eduardo dos Santos and with the leader of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), Mr. Jonas Savimbi, as well as with senior officials from both sides. Their main focus was the formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, on the status of which I reported to the Security Council on 19 March 1997 (S/1997/239).

3. On 21 March 1997, the Joint Commission adopted a draft law on the special status of Mr. Savimbi, in his capacity as the leader of the largest opposition party. That draft is to be presented to the National Assembly for promulgation into law. The Joint Commission also adopted an updated timetable for the implementation of the outstanding provisions of the Lusaka Protocol.

4. Regarding the crucial issue of the normalization of State administration throughout the national territory, the Central Intersectoral Operation Group, the body responsible for the implementation of that task under the chairmanship of the Minister for Territorial Administration, has held two meetings and adopted its terms of reference and rules of procedure. The Government has proposed to start the normalization process as soon as possible in M'banza Congo, capital of the province of Zaire, but UNITA has maintained that the

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process can proceed in the areas of the country it controls only after the establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation.

5. During the reporting period, the dissemination of hostile propaganda by UNITA has shown a marked increase, especially over Radio "Vorgan". While the administrative formalities for the transformation of "Vorgan" into a non-partisan radio station have been completed, the allocation of frequencies has yet to be agreed upon. UNITA's request for the use of short-wave frequencies has not been accepted by the Government, which has however indicated that it would be prepared to authorize UNITA to establish as many FM stations as it wishes, to enable it to broadcast as widely as possible.

6. In an attempt to overcome the impasse in the peace process, and to impress upon the parties the need to establish the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, I undertook to visit Angola. I arrived in Luanda on 22 March and held consultations with my Special Representative, Prime Minister Van-Dunem and Foreign Minister de Moura, as well as with the representatives of the three observer States and the heads of the Government and UNITA delegations to the Joint Commission.

7. On 21 March, after consultations with my Special Representative, the Government agreed to begin, without any preconditions, to discuss a programme for the new Government; those discussions started on the same day. On 24 March, I met with Mr. Savimbi in Bailundo and, as a result of our frank tête-à-tête, the UNITA leader agreed to send all remaining UNITA National Assembly deputies to Luanda on 25 March. I undertook to welcome them personally in the Angolan capital and to address a joint session of the National Assembly to be held on the same day. Mr. Savimbi promised that several UNITA officials designated to take up posts in the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation who were present in Bailundo would also arrive in Luanda on 25 March, on the same flight, to be arranged by the United Nations. The rest of the designated officials would proceed to Luanda not later than 26 March, so as to allow the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation to be inaugurated expeditiously.

8. I also explored with Mr. Savimbi the possibility of arranging in the near future a meeting inside Angola between him and President dos Santos. All the above-mentioned issues were considered in detail during my meeting with President dos Santos on 24 March. He welcomed the promising signs which had emerged from my talks in Bailundo. At the same time, President dos Santos stressed the importance of the full implementation of all major aspects of the Lusaka Protocol, including military, police and political matters, the extension of state administration throughout Angola and other pressing issues. He expressed the hope that the international community would continue to monitor closely the peace process in Angola until all obligations derived from the Lusaka Protocol had been fulfilled. With regard to the formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, President dos Santos emphasized that he would determine a date for the inauguration of that Government after the arrival of all UNITA deputies and designated officials in Luanda, bearing in mind the time needed for proper preparations.

III. MILITARY ASPECTS

9. The ceasefire has continued to hold throughout Angola. Small-scale incidents persist, however, particularly in the provinces of Benguela and Huila, involving attacks on villages mainly by the Civil Defence Corps, but also by the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA), UNITA and unidentified elements. Government armed forces still have not withdrawn from some locations in the province of Bié. In the Lundas, some tension also persists over control of diamond-producing areas. Allegations by UNITA of FAA infiltration and UNITA's continued restriction on UNAVEM activities have also heightened tension. Both sides also continue to accuse each other of troop movements, none of which has been confirmed by UNAVEM III.

10. As at 20 March 1997, 70,904 UNITA troops had been registered in the 15 selection and demobilization centres maintained by the United Nations. Of that number, 26,966 have deserted or were temporarily absent from the camps. During the reporting period, little progress was made in the demobilization process. With regard to the selection of UNITA troops to be incorporated into FAA, on 12 March 1997 both parties agreed to terminate the exercise, and the Government announced that, as at that date, a total of 17,209 UNITA troops had been selected. As at 20 March, the total of those incorporated into FAA had reached 7,491.

11. No progress has been made in dismantling the four remaining UNITA command posts. UNITA has not provided a list of its communications equipment despite numerous promises to do so, and it has not surrendered any further military or communications material. Nor has UNITA provided information on the strength and military equipment of its President's security detachment. During the reporting period, the number of known illegal checkpoints on Angolan roads increased from 121 to 132. Illegal checkpoints manned by Government forces have increased by one, to 56, while those controlled by UNITA have increased by 10, to 76. Neither side has been as cooperative in lifting the checkpoints as they were prior to December 1996.

12. As at 20 March, 5,297 United Nations troops, 396 military observers and 258 police observers were deployed throughout Angola. In accordance with the withdrawal plan for UNAVEM III submitted to the Security Council in my report dated 2 December 1996 (S/1996/1000), between 26 February and 4 March 1997, 395 peacekeepers withdrew from Angola without replacement. Another 662 military personnel are scheduled to withdraw by the end of March. With the scheduled withdrawal of 214 personnel in April 1997, UNAVEM III will have reduced the strength of its military units by about 30 per cent. The Special Representative and the Force Commander have recommended that the further withdrawal of infantry units be slightly delayed, although the overall withdrawal process is still expected to be completed as planned by the end of August 1997.

13. Despite administrative and logistic constraints, UNAVEM III has so far trained and deployed seven Angolan demining brigades, each with 70 personnel, for the Angolan National Institute for the Removal of Unexploded Ordnance (INAROE). A training and logistics base has been established in Viana town, and operational control of that facility was handed over to INAROE on 21 February 1997. UNAVEM III provides equipment for all the demining brigades and the four regional headquarters.

14. During 1996, INAROE deminers and staff received from the Government no financial support other than salary payment, but they have not been paid since the beginning of this year and are totally dependent on United Nations-funded salary supplements and food allowance. Subject to the agreement of the Government, responsibility for support to INAROE will be transferred to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under a two-year programme at an estimated cost of $25 million, to be funded primarily through voluntary contributions from international donors. The Government has not yet formally replied to the UNDP proposal, which was submitted on 24 January. In the interim, UNAVEM III continues to support INAROE on a reimbursable basis from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. As indicated in my report of 7 February 1997 (S/1997/115), up to 38 United Nations military demining specialists will be required until June 1997. Given the importance of the project, however, continued support may be required even beyond that date, and I shall revert to this question in due course.

15. Non-governmental organizations continue to undertake vital humanitarian survey and demining operations in eight provinces, but those operations will gradually be brought under the direction of INAROE. All are experiencing a decrease in the level of funding by donors. While the eradication of mines and unexploded ordnance may take decades, the Government is determined to remove within five years all those posing an immediate threat to communities. This can only be achieved if financial assistance continues to be provided by the international community.

IV. POLICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS

16. As at 20 March 1997, 4,905 UNITA policemen had been registered in all 15 quartering areas. Of that number, 873 had deserted and 495 were absent. Of the 5,011 declared by UNITA to be the total strength of its police force, 106 are yet to be quartered. A total of 2,152 weapons of various types and more than 4,000 rounds of ammunition were handed over to UNAVEM III by the quartered personnel. The selection of security personnel for the protection of UNITA leaders was completed, as well as the training of all three groups of recruits, but 34 recruits have deserted from the third group. UNITA has expressed no readiness to replace them, on the grounds that it has already complied with its obligations and that responsibility for the protection of UNITA leaders rests henceforth with the Government.

17. As at 20 March 1997, only 449 UNITA personnel had been selected by the Angolan National Police, as many of those screened did not meet the requirements set by the Government. The educational requirement for selection has now been lowered and instructions have been sent to the selection teams to this effect. Arrangements have been made to complete the selection and incorporation process by 31 March 1997, but the list of UNITA senior officers nominated for induction has yet to be made available.

18. The Angolan National Police continued to carry out sporadic operations to disarm the civilian population in different parts of the country. As at 20 March 1997, some 3,388 arms of various types and more than 16,766 rounds of ammunition had been collected from the civilian population. The storage and

custody of all the weapons collected are monitored and verified by the civilian police of UNAVEM III. Immediate steps need to be taken to disarm the Civil Defence Corps personnel. Incentives, either in cash or in kind, also need to be introduced to encourage civilians to hand over their weapons.

19. UNAVEM III has diversified and stepped up its human rights promotion activities with the cooperation of the respective provincial committees. On the occasion of International Women's Day, on 8 March, UNAVEM III organized meetings for the promotion of women's rights in most of the provinces where human rights officers are deployed. Seminars were conducted in schools in the province of Cuando Cubango and churches in the provinces of Luanda and Malanje, as well as for national police officers in the provinces of Uíge and Huila.

20. During the reporting period, 16 complaints of human rights violations were lodged with UNAVEM III by individuals and other sources. The Standing Ad Hoc Group set up by the Joint Commission to follow up complaints and alleged human rights violations has made progress in its investigations and will report to the Joint Commission in due course. Almost all the 59 complaints lodged so far have been examined, and remedial measures have been adopted by the Government or by UNITA whenever the allegations were proved. I am gratified that a number of European countries and the European Union have agreed to finance the continuing services of the human rights monitors deployed in Angola.

V. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

21. During February and March 1997, lack of security in the south and north of the country hindered normal humanitarian activities and resulted in the death of the coordinator of a local non-governmental organization on the Cubal-Benguela road on 7 February. Other armed attacks in the province of Benguela caused the displacement of an estimated 4,700 families to Cubal town from the Yambala region south of Cubal. The World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations have provided assistance to the displaced. Attacks on other villages in the region have provoked the movement of the population in and around Chicuma and Casseque towns. Humanitarian organizations are assisting some 3,100 families from 14 villages in the region. Since November 1996, an estimated 14,000 people have been displaced by insecurity in the province of Benguela. In February 1997, Save the Children evacuated Quibaxe, a UNITA-controlled area in Bengo province, after armed groups looted all stored food and non-food items destined for distribution to populations in and around the municipality. Save the Children has not returned to the area since the evacuation. According to UNITA officials, lack of security in Bengo province stems from the fact that UNITA police have vacated the localities in order to be quartered.

22. Drought in some parts of the country has resulted in crop damage in coastal regions and some northern provinces. A joint mission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP is scheduled to assess the food supply situation in mid-April. A UNICEF vaccination campaign is under way in the northern region and in other parts of the country. The work of vaccination teams in some municipalities has been hindered by UNITA's refusal to let Government personnel work in its areas.

23. In an effort to develop a coordinated strategy for the resettlement programme for internally displaced persons, a seminar sponsored by the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reintegration was held in February 1997 and attended by United Nations agencies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and non-governmental organizations. During the reporting period, few internally displaced persons have returned to their areas of origin, owing to insecurity and to delays in the normalization of state administration.

24. As at 20 March 1997, 2,028 ex-UNITA under-age personnel had been demobilized in eight selection and demobilization centres. The demobilization activities of other centres, initially scheduled for mid-February 1997, were postponed because of delays in the disbursement of the Government's special subsidy. UNAVEM III has informed the Government that the regular provision of those funds is essential for the early, rapid and orderly demobilization of excess troops.

25. Another constraint to demobilization has been restricted access for family tracing activities for the under age. Despite ongoing attempts by the United Nations and non-governmental organization humanitarian partners to re-establish contact with some of the under age, who were demobilized during the first phase, it has not always been possible to ensure access at the provincial level and appropriate monitoring. Sporadic incidents also continue to occur in some UNITA areas, including harassment of humanitarian personnel working on family tracing programmes. Furthermore, interference in the choice by quartered personnel of their resettlement locations continued at the local level, despite commitments from UNITA.

26. During the month of February, the first 213 under-age soldiers from FAA were returned to their families, but FAA delays in providing information on the background, expectations and total number of under-age soldiers have complicated planning for their demobilization. As at 15 March 1997, registration of military war disabled was completed at five special centres. Preparations are under way to commence the demobilization for those personnel.

27. On 20 February 1997, a rapid demobilization plan, developed by the Technical Working Group of the Joint Commission, was endorsed by the Commission during a follow-up session of heads of delegations. The plan entails the completion of demobilization of ex-UNITA personnel at all selection and demobilization centres and special centres for the disabled during a five-month period, starting in March and following a regionally based approach. However, the commencement of the rapid demobilization has been delayed pending the declaration of completion of selection of UNITA elements for incorporation into FAA. Although the Government has announced the allocation of funds, the actual availability of the necessary financial resources for the payment of the special subsidy is yet to be confirmed. Continuing delays in the commencement of rapid demobilization are testing the morale of quartered personnel and the financial standing of agencies involved in the process. A strong joint effort and political commitment is, therefore, necessary to ensure the immediate commencement of the orderly demobilization of excess troops, while preparations must be stepped up to facilitate their gradual and progressive reintegration into Angolan society.

28. Furthermore, effective and timely demobilization relies on the strong participation of Government institutions mandated to oversee the reintegration of former military personnel. The institutional rearrangement of the National Institute for the Socio-Professional Reintegration of Ex-Combatants, which is a prerequisite for the correct functioning of the demobilization process, unfortunately has not yet been finalized.

VI. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS

29. During the reporting period, the Council of Ministers adopted the Government's socio-economic programme for 1997, which aims at achieving the following objectives: significant reduction in the level of inflation; effective monetary control; rigorous control of the state budget; unification of foreign exchange rates; stemming the decline in the purchasing power of the population; and improving transparency and discipline in the budgetary process.

30. The Government is planning to launch, with the assistance of UNDP, a programme of economic management to address capacity-building needs in the main economic management institutions. This initiative will complement the existing UNDP/IMF technical assistance programme in the Ministry of Finance and National Bank of Angola. The programme also stresses the need to create an appropriate environment for the development of an indigenous private sector.

31. Inflation in the latter part of 1996 and early in 1997 remained well below the rates of earlier periods, as monthly price increases fell to less than 1.0 per cent in November 1996. A slight increase, due to a loosening of fiscal and monetary controls, was registered late in the year, with monthly inflation rising to 5.5 per cent in December 1996 and 7.9 per cent in January 1997. The Government continued to limit the growth of the money supply by sharply restricting cash payments for budgetary expenditures, but budgetary commitments and arrears continued to mount, raising doubts about how long present policies can be sustained.

32. Further policy discussions with IMF and the World Bank have not yet taken place, as a result of the Ministry of Planning's request that they be postponed until after the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation takes office. Meanwhile, the Government accepted UNDP's proposal to establish an Inter-Ministerial Advisory Group on the economy to advise the Government, monitor economic policies and assist in negotiations with IMF and the World Bank. In addition, the Government has requested assistance in the areas of external debt negotiation, debt swaps and conversions, and in the building of a national capacity to address issues related to external debt.

VII. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

33. As indicated in paragraph 48 of my report of 7 February 1997 (S/1997/115), the General Assembly has provided resources for the maintenance of UNAVEM III for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997, to be assessed on Member States at a monthly rate of $22,996,400 gross ($22,496,800 net), subject to the extension of the Mission's mandate by the Security Council.

34. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III, the cost of maintaining the Mission would be within the monthly rate indicated above.

35. As at 20 March 1997, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNAVEM special account for the period since the inception of the Mission amounted to $126.8 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations was $1,815.9 million.

VIII. OBSERVATIONS

36. Over the past six weeks there has been little progress towards the implementation of the remaining aspects of the Lusaka Protocol. As noted in my report of 19 March 1997 to the Security Council (S/1997/115), despite intensive efforts, the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation has yet to be established, primarily because UNITA did not send to Luanda those of its officials who have been designated to joint the National Assembly and the new Government. The repeated delays in the fulfilment of this obligation have had a negative impact on the implementation of the peace process, including the normalization of state administration throughout Angola, the incorporation of UNITA troops into FAA and the Angolan National Police, and the demobilization of excess UNITA personnel. This was underscored by the Security Council in its statement of 21 March 1997 (S/PRST/1997/17).

37. However, my visit to Angola and, in particular, the meetings I held there with President dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi give rise to expectations that new vigour can be injected into the peace process. The resolution of the future status of the UNITA leader and the promise of Mr. Savimbi to send to Luanda the rest of the UNITA National Assembly deputies and additional designated officials with a view to establishing the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation are encouraging signs. If these commitments are fulfilled, I am confident that it will be possible to establish the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in the very near future. Final and courageous steps need to be taken by the two parties and their leaders in order to complete the peace process expeditiously.

38. The present report describes the discussions I had in Angola as of 24 March. I intend to provide a more detailed assessment of my visit upon my return to Headquarters on 31 March 1997. In the meantime, given the uncertainty concerning the exact date for the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, I recommend that the Security Council consider extending the mandate of UNAVEM III for two weeks only, until 15 April 1997.

Annex

UNAVEM III - contributions as at 20 March 1997

Country	Military observers	Civilian police officers	Staff officers	Troops[a]	Total
Bangladesh	19	21	11	203	254
Brazil	20	10	35	911	976
Bulgaria	10	15	-	-	25
Congo	4	-	-	-	4
Egypt	20	13	1[b]	-	34
France	16	-	11[b]	-	27
Guinea-Bissau	18	4	-	-	22
Hungary	10	7	-	-	17
India	32	10	50	900	992
Jordan	22	21	2[b]	-	45
Kenya	19	-	-	-	19
Malaysia	20	20	3[b]	-	43
Mali	10	15	-	-	25
Namibia	-	-	4	198	202
Netherlands	16	10	8[b]	-	34
New Zealand	6	-	7[b]	-	13
Nigeria	21	21	-	-	42
Norway	5	-	-	-	5
Pakistan	10	-	16[b]	-	26
Poland	7	-	-	-	7
Portugal	10	28	8	311	357
Romania	-	-	23	759	782
Russian Federation	9	-	2	155	166
Senegal	20	-	-	-	20
Slovakia	10	-	-	-	10
Sweden	21	10	-	-	31
Ukraine	5	-	8	3	16
United Republic of Tanzania	-	3	-	-	3
Uruguay	7	13	37[b]	674	731
Zambia	10	15	22	505	552
Zimbabwe	19	22	41	678	760
Total	396	258	289[c]	5 297	6 240

[a] Including military police.

[b] Including military specialists in the UNAVEM III demining school and in Quartering Area Administration.

[c] The total figure does not include the five demining experts seconded by Germany.

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